



RETURN TO DAILY LIFE After Concussion



- This tool is to help guide the return to daily life after a concussion, but does not replace medical advice from a health care professional.
- Each stage lasts at least 24 hours and recovery timelines will vary for each injury. Only move to the next stage when activities can be completed without aggravating symptoms. Do not try to rush the recovery.
- If symptoms return or worsen after moving to a new stage, return to the previous stage.
- When introducing new activities, always begin in 5-15 minute intervals with plenty of breaks. Gradually increase the intervals to up to 30-60 minutes as symptoms allow. Do not increase the interval until symptoms are not provoked by the activity.
- If symptoms do not improve within 48 hours after the initial injury, or if symptoms continue to get worse during the recovery, seek medical help immediately.

STAGE 0 | Rest 

Create a quiet and calm environment to rest physically and cognitively. Sleep as much as needed - be checked on but not woken up. Avoid caffeine, computers, cell phones, TV, reading, physical activity/sports, work, driving, and emotional situations, and keep social visits brief.

Recommended activities:

- Brief phone calls
- Board/card games
- Drawing/colouring
- Other activities that don't require physical or mental exertion

MOVE TO NEXT STAGE | When symptoms begin to improve OR after 48 hours of resting


STAGE 3 | Reduced load, accommodated tasks 

Continue increasing daily tasks slowly as your symptoms allow. Take breaks as needed and use accommodations such as sunglasses, noise-cancelling headphones, etc. if needed to help reduce symptoms.

Recommended activities:

- Use accommodations and communicate them to those around you as needed, such as a quiet environment, breaks, more time needed to complete tasks, etc.
- Carefully monitor symptoms as you increase your activity level

MOVE TO NEXT STAGE | No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours after increased activity

STAGE 1 | Light physical & mental activities 

Begin trying light physical and mental activities at home while carefully monitoring symptoms, and start a consistent sleep schedule. Continue avoiding caffeine, physical exertion/sports, and emotional situations, and keep social visits brief.

Recommended activities:

- Limited computer, cell phone, & T.V. use if symptoms allow
- Light reading
- Walking/yoga
- Simple household cleaning/chores

MOVE TO NEXT STAGE | No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours after 30-60 minutes of light activity


STAGE 4 | Regular/full load, accommodated tasks 

Increase activity level to regular levels while carefully monitoring symptoms. Begin slowly experimenting with removing accommodations as your symptoms allow.

Recommended activities:

- Accommodations should be slowly phased out in test periods to see if symptoms are aggravated or not
- **Acquire medical clearance before performing any tasks that put you at risk for inadvertent contact to the head (if feasible)**

MOVE TO NEXT STAGE | No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours after a full day of regular activity

STAGE 2 | Moderate physical & mental activities 

Begin increasing physical and mental activities to a moderate level as symptoms allow. Limited caffeine use is now acceptable. Increase social/public interaction by running errands, commuting, social visits, etc.

Recommended activities:

- Jogging/cycling
- Sudoku/word puzzles
- Increased peer contact
- Simple errands
- Driving/commuting
- Household cleaning/chores

MOVE TO NEXT STAGE | No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours after 30-60 minutes of moderate activity

STAGE 5 | Slowly remove accommodations 

Begin slowly removing accommodations while carefully monitoring symptoms. Remove one accommodation at a time and reintroduce the accommodation if symptoms worsen.

Recommended activities:

- Move at your own pace and do not ignore symptoms
- **Continue to monitor symptoms over the next few weeks and reintroduce accommodations as needed**

MOVE TO STAGE 6: Return to Daily Life | No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours after a full day with no accommodations